

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we shall take up Private Members' Business.

Shri M. M. A. Khan.

**COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

**SECOND REPORT**

SHRI M. M. A. KHAN (Etah): I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Second Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 18th June, 1980."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Second Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 18th June, 1980."

*The motion was adopted.*

15.29 hrs.

**RESOLUTION RE. CENTRE-STATE RELATIONSHIP—Contd.**

MR CHAIRMAN. The House will now take up further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Shri-mati Suseela Gopalan on 1st February, 1980:—

"This House is of the opinion that a reappraisal of the existing Centre-State relations with a view to give more financial powers and greater autonomy for the States in consonance with the true concept of federalism is necessary and in this context calls upon the Central Government to immediately convene a Conference of Chief Ministers along with representatives of recognised political parties."

Shri C. T. Dhandapani.

SHRI C. T. DHANDAPANI (Pollachi): This question has of course its own meaning and I want to explain the object of this resolution and one would need more time for this.

15.30 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

The hon. Mover of the Bill has taken some pains to bring out the idea of federalism to the notice of the entire nation. I congratulate her. But at the same time I have my own suspicion. The communist parties, left and right, have raised the bogey of state autonomy but they were those who opposed the very same idea on previous occasions. That is why I have my suspicions. In recent times, the Governments of Kerala and the Government of West Bengal are trying to focus attention, not on allocation of funds or sharing of powers between the Centre and the States but they are bent on attacking the Central Government.

DMK is the only party which initiated this idea long ago. That was the main reason why our leader Doctor Kalaignar had initiated the move by appointing the Rajamannar Committee consisting of economists and others high in judiciary. Dr. Rajamannar was the chairman of the Committee; Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and Justice Chandra Reddi were members of that Committee. The object of the Committee was to enquire into Centre-State relations, to examine the existing provisions of the Constitution, to suggest measures for augmenting the resources of the state for securing the utmost autonomy of the state in executive, legislative and judicial branches "without prejudice to the integrity of the country as a whole". That Committee gave a report in 1971. That report was considered by a committee set up by the DMK Party itself and then the report was brought before the State legislative assembly. The state government published a white paper asking for the

approval of the House. At that time the opposition was the AIADMK and that party opposed the idea of more powers to the state on the ground that it was not good for the integrity of the country. The allied parties, the communist parties, also opposed the move of the Government in the Assembly. They said because D.M.K. brought that Resolution in the Assembly, they opposed it. The then Chief Minister of Kerala Mr. Achuta Menon himself was casting aspersions on our Resolution. At the same time D.M.K. did not want to do anything against the Central Government. But our object was as Anna wrote, when he was the Chief Minister, an article in English 'Home Rule' in 1969. He used to write letters, articles in the form of letters calling his party cadres.

"Dear Brother,

Never have I been made after power. Nor am I happy of being Chief Minister of our State under a Constitution which is on paper federal but in actual practice tends to get more and more centralised. On that account I do not declare that it is my intention to irritate the Centre or pick up quarrels with Delhi. That helps none. True, a sense of determination at the appropriate stage is all important. But this should be preceded by educating the public on federalism itself. In fact, dear Brother, I am quite confident of your active co-operation and intimate participation".

This he wrote in 1969 itself. The real thing as is needed to be discussed is the Centre-State relationship.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You have to conclude within two three minutes.

SHRI C. T. DHANDAPANI: It is a wide subject, How can I....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Already one Member has spoken from your party.

SHRI C. T. DHANDAPANI: The federal concept is not only the sharing of power or not only the financial allocations between the Centre and the State, but it is something more.

I should quote Dr. K. C. Wheare. He stated while writing 'Modern Constitution' particularly about a country where there are people of different languages, different cultures, different civilisations and different religions.

"If these communities differ in race and religion, safeguards may be needed to guarantee to them a free exercise of these national characteristics. Even when communities do not differ in language, race or religion, they may still be unwilling to unite unless they are guaranteed a measure of independence inside the Union."

According to him a safeguard is necessary for all the communities in minority or majority. That is why a Federal Constitution will help the communities where people seek protection from the Centre or the State. I do not want to go deep in the matter of federalism because my other friends have spoken much about this. As far as this country is concerned, federal polity is inevitable. Even our Government has accepted because now we have a unitary form of Government. In principle it has been accepted even in many cases. Our hon. Member Shri Sanjay Gandhi himself has stated at various forums, the policy of the Government and the Congress Party is to have a strong Centre and strong States. The D.M.K. Party also thinks on the same lines. The Centre should be strong. At the same time the State Government should be strong—in the manner that their financial position should be strong. They should have strong administrative power. At the same time they must have a strong say about their grievances in the Central Government. That is why I say this federal set up is not an easy thing. I know it is a difficult thing. I know

[Shri C. T. Dhandapani]

the functioning of a federal government is difficult. There are many countries in the world which advocate federalism like Australia, Switzerland, USA, etc., but they differ from one another. As far as India is concerned, we have to find some way suitable to our political system. Therefore, I would appeal to the Government to come forward with a proposal or have some dialogue or appoint a commission to go into the matters of Centre-State relationship.

Many problems have not been solved. For example, only day before yesterday a discussion took place here on the inter-State water disputes. Tamil Nadu lacks water for irrigation. At the same time, some other States have more water for irrigation. But we are not able to get that water. The simple reason is that the Central Government do not interfere in this matter to settle the issues of inter-State water disputes. Article 262 has not at all been invoked in many cases. That is why the Administrative Reforms Commission constituted a study group which concluded that there were 3 alternatives:

(i) a provision for the settlement of disputes by the Supreme Court in the same manner as the provision for the settlement of other disputes, according to article 131;

(ii) the transfer of rights in rivers (whether intra-State or inter-State) to the Centre and making irrigation and hydro-electric power central subjects; or

(iii) adhering broadly to the existing constitutional position but tightening the existing legal provisions and administrative arrangements.

These are the recommendations given by the ARC. I want to place the matter before the House and request that these things should be taken into account. This is an important question for all the States. This system of appointing commissions exists in all the countries like USA, Australia or West Germany, to solve such problems. Take boundary disputes between States. Under Article 3, the Central Government has got sweeping powers to alter or extend the boundaries of any States. In other countries, if any such proposal comes from the Central Government, it will be first put before the public and a referendum takes place. After that, the matter of alteration or extension of boundaries is taken up by the Central Government. This is what happens in countries like Switzerland or Australia. Therefore, this should be considered by the Government.

Then, take the appointment of Governors. The Central Government appoints Governors for five years and they continue during the pleasure of the Government. But they cannot remove the Governors. Many Governors during the Emergency period were acting against the wishes of the Central Government. For example, in Tamil Nadu the Governor was acting against the wishes of the Central Government. He was not at all acting according to the programme

of the Government. That is why, there was ill-feeling and irritation against the Central Government for the last five months. But the Central Government cannot do anything. Once he is appointed, he cannot be removed. You can merely transfer him from one State to another. This type of lacunae and bottlenecks still exist in the Constitution. A committee should be appointed either in consultation with the Chief Ministers or the Prime Minister herself can do it in consultation with the constitutional experts, find ways to remove this kind of lacunae in the Constitution so that it can bring a new hope to the people in future.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There are so many Members from the Congress (I) who want to speak on this Resolution. But there is no time. 12 Members have already spoken. Therefore, the Minister will intervene and the Mover will reply.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMEN- TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKA- TASUBBAIAH): Mr. Deputy-Spea- ker, Sir, the resolution that has been brought forward by Smt. Sushila Gopalan is being debated upon from the previous session. I feel that the Re- solution has come at a proper time when this country is faced with several challenges both outside and inside. The situation in the North- eastern region gives us a challenge

and makes us alive to the problem that faces this country with regard to preserving the sovereignty and in- tegrity of the country. Fissiparous tendencies like secession have raised their ugly heads. Posters have ap- peared that the North-eastern region should secede from our country. In the context of these things, I feel very genuinely and also very honestly that the time has come when we have to make up our mind with regard to the Centre-State relationship and to what extent the States and the Centre can work together to Preserve the integrity and sovereignty of this country. Smt. Gopalan has raised two important points. One is with regard to greater autonomy for the State in consonance with the concept of federalism and the Centre-State relationship that exists today. What is meant by the concept of federalism? Is it on the basis of federalism adopted by the American Constitution or any other federalism? The hon. Member did not specify here what type of federalism she asked for. Sir, when this Consti- tution was framed, this matter was very exhaustively gone into. There, the framers of the Constitution, especially Dr. Ambedkar, posed before the Constituent Assembly two options. He said that he compared the federa- lism that exists in America and the Constitution we would like to frame, as Mr. Dhandapani has said, "to suit the genius and the conditions of our country".

Dr. Ambedkar said:

"The Presidential system of America is based upon the separa- tion of the Executive and the

[Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah]

Legislature. So that the President and his Secretaries cannot be members of the Congress. The Draft Constitution does not recognise this doctrine. The Ministers under the Indian Union are Members of Parliament. Only Members of Parliament can become Ministers. Ministers have the same right as other Members of Parliament, namely, that they can sit in Parliament, take part in debates and vote in its proceedings”.

He further said:

“Both systems of Government are of course democratic and the choice between the two is not very easy. A democratic executive must satisfy two conditions: (1) It must be a stable executive. (2) It must be a responsible executive. Unfortunately, it has not been possible so far to devise a system which can ensure both in equal degree. You can have a system which can give you more stability, but less responsibility or you can have a system which gives you more responsibility but less stability”

Again he compared thus:

“Under the non-parliamentary system such as the one that exists in U.S.A the assessment of the responsibility of the executive is periodic. It takes place once in two years. It is done by the Electorate. In England, where the parliamentary system prevails,—because we have almost adopted the English type of parliamentary democracy—

“...the assessment of responsibility of the Executive is both daily and periodic. The daily assessment is done by Members of Parliament through questions, Resolutions. No-confidence motions, Adjournment motions and debates on Addresses. Periodic assessment is done by the Electorate at the time of election which may take place every 5 years or earlier. The daily assess-

ment of responsibility which is not available under the American system is, it is felt, far more effective than the periodic assessment and far more necessary in a country like India.”

That is why we have deliberately opted for a system that gives more flexibility and also more answerability to the Parliament as well as to the people. Here, this dialogue has been going on for many years. At the intellectual level and at the level of politicians this dialogue was going on—to what extent more autonomy is to be given? ‘Autonomy’ means it has a sort of an independent character to give the fullest autonomy to the States or is it only the allocation of financial resources between the State and the Central Government?

This dialogue has been going on. Several memoranda were sent or resolutions passed from time to time. As my friend Shri Dhandapani just now said, this was initiated by the DMK Government who appointed the Rajamanner Committee and came forward with certain resolutions. Even as late as 1978-79 when the Janata Party was in power, it was felt that the present system was working effectively and need not be changed. The CPM and CPI were supporters of the Janata Party then. The present system has stood the test of time. The Constitution gives the necessary powers to both the Centre and the States. The feeling of the Members here also is common in one respect that the Central Government as also the State Governments must be strong, each in the sphere allotted to it by the Constitution.

The demand for greater autonomy arose in 1967 when in some States political parties with different ideologies came to power. They started demanding more autonomy and more financial powers to the States. In those days the DMK Government might have felt genuinely that their interests were not well safeguarded, but

I feel that after experience Shri Karunanidhi may be feeling the other way now. It holds good of the other non-Congress Governments of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal also.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Did Karunanidhi communicate to you his latest views?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: "May" I said, He can communicate only through you.

It may be a strange coincidence that these three State Governments belong to different political parties.

16 hrs.

The figures show that at no time the autonomy of the States was interfered with. They have got their respective areas of operation, the State List, the Central List and the Concurrent List. Shri Dhandapani, while pleading for more autonomy to the States, said that the Governors, once appointed, cannot be removed; they can only be transferred and, therefore, the Centre must have more powers to dismiss them. He also said about the inter-State water dispute.

These are the factors to be borne in mind. In a country like ours which is multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-cultural, there are several problems. Also, a pernicious theory of the "Sons of the Soil" has been raised. If you go to the farthest extent of giving the maximum autonomy to the States, I do not know when we will be heading for a fragmentation. "Autonomy" is being understood or misunderstood in the sense of sovereign independent republics.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN (Trichur): No; that is not so.

49 L.S.—11.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The agitation is going on....

AN HON. MEMBER: We have nothing to do with the agitation.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: But how can you prevent such agitations? This is a country where we have fought for preservation of the integrity and sovereignty of the country, whether it is Assam or Kerala or Kashmir. The country is one and indivisible. We have to fight for the integrity of this country. So, we should not give room for any fissiparous tendencies by using the slogan of "More Autonomy". "More Autonomy" is not being understood in the proper sense of the term. This is not an appropriate time at all to voice such feelings.

Even with regard to allocation of finances from the Centre to States, I can quote figures for the information of the House. In the year 1951-52 to 1955-56, the transfer based on the recommendation of the Finance Commission was Rs. 447 crores and the total allocation that has been made to the States including Finance Commission grant, loan assistance, discretionary amount, amounted to Rs. 1431 crores. Now, according to the recommendation of the Seventh Finance Commission, the funds to be allocated to various States have gone up from Rs. 1431 crores to Rs. 25,282 crores.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What is the total revenue earned from the States?

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: The total transfer to all States recommended by the Seventh Finance Commission would be 55 per cent of the total divisible tax receipt of the Central Government and 26 per cent of the total revenue receipt of the Central Government. Even in the matter of income-tax receipts, it has gone up from 80 to 85 per cent; in the case of Union excise duty, it has gone up from 20 to 40 per cent. So, substan-

[Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah]

tial financial allocations are being made to the State Governments to provide them with the necessary wherewithal to run the States according to the provisions of the Constitution.

So, in the matter of providing more autonomy, and the suggestion of the Hon. Member who moved the Resolution to convene a conference of the Chief Ministers along with the representatives of recognised political parties—that is the operative portion of the Resolution—there have been constant consultations in several forums between the Central Government and the State Governments. There are the National Development Council, the Chief Minister's Conference and now the National Integration Council also. So there are several forums where there has been a continuous dialogue between the state Governments and the Central Government to evolve a policy of mutual adjustment and also to see that no friction is caused between the States and the Centre, and, in their respective areas, no infringement is done. The central Government respects the autonomy of the States and, in so far as the provisions of the constitution regarding the powers enjoyed by the State are concerned, there has been no occasion to feel that the present autonomy that has been enjoyed by the State Governments has, at any time, been jeopardised or has been infringed upon by the Central Government. The Constitution provides ample scope for safeguarding the interests of the various state Governments as well as the Centre.

So, in the present context of things, Government feels that the present Constitutional provisions are strong enough. They have stood the test of time, and there is no need to have another meeting of the Chief Ministers and representatives of political parties to go into this matter.

I congratulate the Hon. Member that she was able to highlight the problem before this country in this Parliament which reflects the opinion of the people. She has done her duty well by her constituency, by her state and by

Parliament and she was able to create a sort of enthusiasm and provoke Members to participate very constructively and usefully in the deliberations.

So, I would once again request the Hon. Member to withdraw her Resolution and help the Central Government and the States to have a cordial relationship, to work for the welfare of the common man. With these words I would again request the Hon. Member to withdraw her Resolution.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Smt. Suseela Gopalan will now reply.

SHRIMATI SUSELA GOPALAN (Alleppy): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy that many of the Members in the House have wholeheartedly supported the Resolution and suggested that the Central Government may have an early meeting of the Chief Ministers. I accept the fact that though our Constitution is federal in principle, it is essentially unitary in character. It is an accepted fact, that whether it is federal or unitary depends upon the sweet will of the Centre. Dr. Ambedkar had himself said that whenever the Central Government want, it will be federal; if they want it to be otherwise, it will be unitary.

Regarding the concept of a strong Centre, I think, many hon. Members and the Government has a certain misconception about it. The hon. Minister referred to the recent happenings in the north-eastern border States. The recent happenings in the country actually warrant a serious and thorough discussion on this subject. Why are these happenings there? The Minister also referred to the question of sons of soil. That question has also come up. Why are these fissiparous tendencies coming up? You will have to go into it in detail and study the problem. In all the States, people are feeling that they are being neglected. Not only in the northern States, but even in Kerala and other States, the feeling is there that they are being neglected. What about U. P. and Bihar? They have the same feeling. Bihar is giving enough

excise duty: but what is their position? They are also backward. That means, you cannot manage things properly from the Centre. You have to decentralise powers and see that they themselves manage the things in the States.

When Mr. Mohanty was speaking, he was saying that, after the Partition of India, the Constituent Assembly thought that there should be a strong Centre; he also says that, as a result of that, enough safeguards are there in the Constitution against weakening of India. I would like to ask my colleague whether he holds the same view even after the happenings in Assam and in other border States. For the last 33 years, this trial of concentrating more and more powers at the Centre has been there. But what has been the result of that? Could you preserve the unity of India? All sorts of fissiparous tendencies are developing in our country. Even the voice of secession is being raised from the eastern parts. Will the ruling Party learn some lessons from this? You actually deviate from the concept of the Congress which visualised a federal government with the minimum, essential subjects with the Centre and maximum subjects with the States. I would like to ask the ruling Party whether they still hold the views of Mahatma Gandhi. What is the concept of Gram Swaraj? Decentralisation of power was the message contained in Gram Swaraj....

AN HON. MEMBER: Which Gandhi?

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: I am speaking about Mahatma Gandhi, not about Sanjay Gandhi. I know, he is opposed to giving more powers to the States; he wants to concentrate more and more powers at the Centre; he has himself said that, if the Centre intervenes in States then the weaker sections can be protected; while speaking on my Resolution he has said that if the Centre takes more

powers, then the weaker sections can be protected. For the last so many months, you had control in the States. What happened? Could you save the weaker sections? Day in and day out, attacks were being made against the weaker sections. What was it due to? I have no time; that is why, I am not going to deal with it in detail. It was due to your not taking ample measures to protect the weaker sections. I can quote the instance of Kerala where land legislations and other protective measures are made for the weaker sections, for the agricultural workers and peasants. There they are not beaten up. There they are not attacked. So, that is a lesson you have to learn. Taking power into the hands at the Centre is not a solution for this. You have to give States more powers because in a country like India with different nationalities and cultural groups, it is impossible to direct all the affairs from one Centre. For the last 33 years you have tried and the result you have seen. To-day in various parts of the country a strong feeling of neglect is developing. So, you have to give more powers, more financial resources and also administrative powers to the States. Even now the Centre is not prepared to sit with the State Governments and talk with them and discuss with them to solve their problems.

I can cite the example of Kerala. Recently, the coco producers are facing an acute problem of selling their coco produce. They have appealed to the Central Government not to import and not to give up the import duty. But what have you done? You have taken a decision to import coco. To save whom? Only the Cadbury Company. Thousands of peasants in Kerala are angry at this attitude of the Centre. Can't you sit with the State Government and discuss with them and try? I know it is because of Cadbury Company. The coco requirements of the country is only 2000 tonnes whereas Kerala and

[Smt. Susheela Gopalan]

Karnatakas together produce more than 3000 tonnes. Still you are importing coco. Same is the case with regard to rubber. If you do like this, what will be the feeling of the people in the States?

You are not prepared even to discuss with them the 1981 Plan programme. You do not invite the Chief Ministers for discussion in the National Development Council. It all depends on your sweetwill. The Minister was telling the National Development Council is there, the National Integration Council is there. But will they meet? Even recently when we protested, when the Kerala Chief Minister protested and said that the Plan programme of 80-81 should be discussed, you did not call them. You did not consult them. You are claiming that you are going to consult for this Sixth Five Year Plan but this is a part of the Sixth Plan. They have many things to tell you. So it is essential that you consult the States. But everything depends upon your sweetwill and there is no statutory provision to force you to do all these things. So, there must be some provision, some constitutional provision to sit with the State Government and force the Central Government discuss things. That is not there at present. That is why we are asking that a reappraisal of the State-Centre relations is quite necessary. If that is not done, I warn you, the ruling Party, that if they fail to read the writing on the wall, more things are going to happen in this country. Now, only the north-eastern States say that they want separation. If that is not done, even other States will follow suit. That is the feeling in every State. In a vast country like ours, you cannot direct things from the Centre. So, whether it is written in the Constitution or not—we have changed the Constitution 44 times, that means in the constitution when it was framed, everything was not there and as you gain experience, you change the Constitution. So, Sir, this is the need of the hour. If you are not prepared to do that, even the

State Governments which are now run by the ruling party, the Congress (I), will themselves turn against you and that day is not very far because I tell you their own difficulties are there. The States are finding it very difficult to manage. So you have to have a reappraisal and change it. I request the government even at this late stage call a meeting and do that. This is a simple thing—calling a meeting of Chief Ministers and political parties and having a discussion as to whether there is any change needed. If they all feel that no change is needed, then you can convince them and take measures to help them.

That is our experience so far. So, I appeal to the Government to accept the proposal to call the Conference of the Chief Ministers and all the political parties and discuss the same with them. This is the proper time because fissiparous tendencies are developing throughout the country. We want a Strong Centre. Centre can have important portfolios like Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications and such other things kept with the Centre but, the other things should be given to the States. The Centre should give the powers to the States so that States can pass on to the District Councils and the Panchayats. Then only the aspirations of the people can be fulfilled.

So, I appeal once again to the hon. Minister to accept this Resolution and take steps to convene the Conference.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Are you pressing your Resolution?

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: I am pressing my Resolution. Let the Minister say something.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: She has made excellent points. And Government has stated its position. So, I would request her to withdraw her Resolution.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now that the Minister has made a second appeal to you, are you withdrawing your Resolution?

**SHRI ANANDA GOPAL MUKHOPADHYAY (Asansol):** She has made a very good speech. Let her now withdraw the Resolution.

**SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL (Ernakulam):** Considering the second Resolution of Shri Kodyan, I request the hon. Member to withdraw her Resolution.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** She is pressing her Resolution. Before putting that to the vote, let me dispose of the amendment. Shri A. Neelalohithadasan is not present. I shall not his amendment to the vote of the House.

**SHRI P. VENKATASUBBIAH:** We are not accepting the amendment and we are opposing the Resolution.

**SHRI SATYASADAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the amendment moved is for a strong Centre which the ruling party does not want to accept. They are indicating thereby that they do not want to have a strong Centre. Therefore, let them accept the Resolution of the hon. Member.

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER.** I shall put Amendment No. 1 moved by Shri A. Neelalohithadasan to the vote of the House.

*Amendment No. 1 was put and negatived.*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Now, I shall put the main Resolution to the vote of the House:

The question is:

“This House is of the opinion that a reappraisal of the existing Centre-State relations with a view to give more financial powers and greater autonomy for the States in consonance with the true concept of federalism is necessary and in this context calls upon the Central Government to immediately convene a Conference of Chief Ministers along with representatives of recognised political parties”.

*The motion was negatived.*

16.5 hrs.

#### RESOLUTION RE: CENTRAL LEGISLATION FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

**SHRI P. K. KODIYAN (Adoor):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

“This House calls upon the Government to take early steps to enact Central legislation to protect the interests of the vast millions of agricultural workers of our country who are subjected to ruthless forces of exploitation as wage earners in agriculture and who remain by and large unprotected by the existing labour laws.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am glad that I have got an opportunity to raise the problems and difficulties in this august House of the vast millions of agricultural workers of our country who continue to be most oppressed, most neglected and at the same time the most exploited section among the working people of our country.

Sir, the number of agricultural workers is not small. They perhaps constitute the largest section of workers in India. According to the 1971 census, the total number of agricultural workers was 47.48 million and now that number must have exceeded even the 50 million mark. According to the 1971 census, they constitute more than 1/4th of the total work force in India and they also constitute about 1/3rd of the total work force in the country side. They supply about 42 per cent of the physical labour required in Indian agriculture. Such a vast number of workers who have been playing a very vital role in the agrarian economy of our country have all along been neglected and ignored, though since independence there has been considerable progress in our agriculture. The production of foodgrains is more than doubled. The production of other agricultural crops also has substantially increased. The income from agriculture also has substantially